

Message Text

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PEPR, ID, PP

SUBJECT: GOI ACTIVITIES IN EAST TIMOR AND WEST IRIAN

1. ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE AND DAS OAKLEY RAISED WITH INDONESIAN AMBASSADOR ASHARI ON JULY 14 QUESTIONS OF GOI MILITARY ACTIVITY IN EAST TIMOR AND WEST IRIAN. THEY NOTED USG GENERAL SUPPORT FOR INDONESIA, INCLUDING ASSISTANCE IN ECONOMIC AND MILITARY FIELDS, EXEMPLIFIED BY RECENT VISIT OF VICE PRESIDENT. HOWEVER, USG IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY CONCERNED OVER REPORTS OF STEPPED-UP GOI
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MILITARY ACTIVITY AGAINST DISSIDENTS IN EAST TIMOR AND WEST IRIAN. PAST INDONESIAN MILITARY ACTIVITY IN BOTH PLACES RAISED VERY SERIOUS QUESTIONS HERE AS TO INDONESIAN POLICY AND U.S. REACTION THERETO. SAME WAS TRUE WITH INDONESIA'S NEIGHBORS. COMBINATION OF PAST HISTORY AND RECENT REPORTS BEGINS TO RAISE THESE QUESTIONS ANEW.

2. REPORTS OF MAJOR OFFENSIVE AGAINST FRETILIN ON EAST TIMOR CAME AT TIME WHEN USG HAS AGREED TO PARTICIPATION BY ITS CHARGE IN PRESIDENT SUHARTO'S TRIP THERE. DECISION WAS NOT AN EASY ONE, GIVEN USG POLICY TOWARD TIMOR, BUT WAS MADE IN LIGHT OF GOI STATED INTENT TO OPEN UP ISLAND TO INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS, TO ALLOW CRS TO START ACTIVITIES THERE VERY SOON, AND TO BEGIN TALKS WITH

ICRC ON ITS BECOMING ACTIVE THERE. USG STRONGLY SUPPORTS GOI ACTIONS OF THIS SORT, AIMED AT IMPROVING LOT OF LOCAL POPULATION AND ENCOURAGING PEACEFUL RATHER THAN MILITARY SOLUTION. A MAJOR MILITARY CAMPAIGN, ON OTHER HAND, IS SOMETHING WHICH USG CAN ONLY DISAPPROVE AND WHICH WILL ALSO ERODE GOI SUPPORT WITH CONGRESS.

3. APPARENT STEP-UP OF MILITARY ACTIVITY IN WEST IRIAN WILL ALSO ERODE GOI SUPPORT IN THIS COUNTRY, JUST AS IT IS ALREADY TROUBLING PROFOUNDLY PAPUA NEW GUINEA. VISIT OF PNG FOREIGN MINISTER TO INDONESIA AND ACTIONS TAKEN IN BORDER AREA BY PNG AFTER HE RETURNED INDICATED CLEAR DESIRE TO COOPERATE WITH GOI AND SEE THAT DISSIDENTS IN IRIAN JAYA WERE NOT ALLOWED TO OPERATE FREELY ACROSS BORDER. THIS IS SOMETHING WHICH USG HAS ENCOURAGED. YET RECENT GOI INCREASE IN MILITARY ACTIVITY IN BORDER AREA, INCLUDING AT LEAST ONE MAJOR INCURSION INTO PNG TERRITORY AND BOMBINGS OF VILLAGES NEAR THE BORDER HAS CAUSED CONFIDENTIAL

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NEGATIVE REACTION IN PNG AND OPENED GOVERNMENT TO STRONG CRITICISM BY OPPOSITION FOR COLLABORATING WITH GOI. ALIENATING PNG IS HARDLY IN INTEREST OF GOI AND WILL AROUSE WIDER CONCERN IN AREA AS WELL AS WITH USG. SOME KEY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, WHO HAVE BEEN SYMPATHETIC TO GOI, WILL ALSO REACT NEGATIVELY SHOULD THE LATTER APPEAR TO SHIFT FROM BASICALLY POLITICO-ECONOMIC RESOLUTION OF PROBLEMS OF WEST IRIAN -- AS DESCRIBED DURING RECENT VISIT TO U.S. BY GOVERNOR SUTRAN OF IRIAN JAYA -- TO A MILITARY APPROACH.

4. AMBASSADOR ASHARI PROMISED HE WOULD REPORT THESE VIEWS TO HIS GOVERNMENT. CHARGE SHOULD TAKE EARLY OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK TO MINISTER OF DEFENSE JUSUF AND GENERAL MURDANI ALONG SIMILAR LINES.

5. FOR INFO ADDRESSES: THE ABOVE IS FYI ONLY AND SHOULD NOT BE DISCUSSED WITH HOST GOVERNMENTS. CHRISTOPHER

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